



A partnership of the business community and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Strategic Action Plan for 2017-2018

Goal 1: *Develop and pursue a marketing and communication strategy that effectively promotes B4B*

We are at a tipping point with B4B; businesses and partners that know about B4B are excited, energized, take on measurable environmental initiatives, and want to continue to participate. More are coming to the Alliance slowly through word of mouth and exposure to the program through events, conferences, and media. Building and marketing the B4B “brand” and what it represents is the key to increased participation and fully realizing potential. This means general and targeted strategies are needed to better communicate and establish the business case (what, why and how of B4B) for the program, spread the word about the measurable actions of our members, and seek more businesses to join us and actively participate.

- Work closely with a consultant to develop a 3 year marketing and communication strategy for B4B including key messages that brand and promote B4B as a membership organization that makes a true, measurable difference.
- Promote key messages through quarterly webinars and in-person presentations for at least 5 major meetings or conferences in the watershed. Highlight B4B members at 5 trade shows and public events. Use B4B exhibit and Member ribbons.
- Promote key messages through B4B documents (such as promotional materials, annual report, etc.), emails, social media, and on the website. Create video testimonials with B4B Members.
- Use existing members to bring colleagues and other businesses to the organization.
- Create a recognition/awards program for B4B.
- Write an article describing the research that quantifies how companies benefit from participating in environmental initiatives and office green teams.
- Complete at least 3 stories for online and print publications about B4B, the measurable actions our members are taking, case studies, and/or Forums (such as Bay Journal June 2017, VA Turfgrass Council article).
- Work with Networking Partners to identify 3 geographic regions in the watershed within which to target business outreach and develop a localized strategy for recruitment in each.

Goal 2: *Build meaningful content for and interaction among B4B Members and Non-Members*

Sustainable membership associations grow by keeping the members they already have. Members will renew each year, knowing B4B is just as valuable now as it was when they first joined. If they are afforded valuable content and resources they will recruit others.

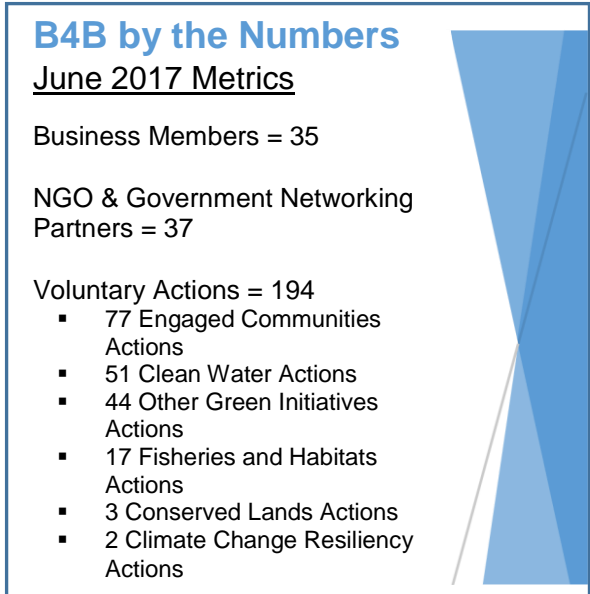
- Accomplish a 95% renewal rate by engaging current members and creating meaningful connections to the larger regional CB restoration effort.
- Deliver quarterly Webinars on CB and professional development related topics (next is June 28, 2017 CBP webinar).
- Send monthly member-only emails that list upcoming events, highlight new and renewed members, and timely information about different topics. Host topical forums on the B4B LinkedIn Group.
- Connect businesses to Alliance programs such as Project Clean Stream, RiverWise, etc.

- Hold In-Person Forums with outcome-based, tangible takeaways
 - June 21, 2017 Smithfield, VA Forum - sea level rise and community strategies and partnerships
 - Fall 2017 Forum in Lancaster County
 - Winter 2017 Forum on the Eastern Shore

Goal 3: Build corporate leadership

Identifying corporate leaders who can serve as catalysts for engagement within various specific business sectors can help to foster greater business participation and increase awareness of B4B.

- Research opportunities and target 3 business sectors that would benefit most from working with the Alliance and B4B and could bring significant positive impact to the watershed.
- Engage the Dairy Industry in PA in an initiative to promote healthy streams and standards for milk cooperatives.
 - Turkey Hill and Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association Healthy Streams Proposal
- Engage the Landscaping/Turfgrass Industry to further water positive landscape approaches for product sales and large and small landscaping companies as well as their homeowner consumers.
 - Work in partnership with B4B Sponsor, Scotts Miracle-Gro, on a March 2018 World Water Day event in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and work with them to build on phosphorus and neonicotinoid bans in consumer education to encourage homeowners to properly use their products.
 - Work in partnership with B4B Networking Partner, Virginia Turfgrass Council (and their diverse membership), to educate turfgrass and landscaping professionals about local environmental initiatives and how their business can make a positive and measurable difference. Apply for at least one grant to support this initiative.



Goal 4: Expand small business engagement

Small businesses have strong potential for in-depth action and usually have direct ties to the public. They can directly educate their clients and employees about environmental topics. Environmentally-minded clients are more likely to support a B4B Member business that is helping our local environment and Bay. Sometimes small businesses don't feel comfortable working together with large corporations, so we want to help bridge that gap with B4B.

- Work with small business B4B Steering Committee members to develop unique recruiting messages and benefits for small business owners to expand participation in B4B and environmental initiatives. Use the identified reasoning when reaching out to small businesses (1-10 employees).
- Establish a special B4B membership rate for businesses with only 1-10 employees, to show those business owners that the Alliance recognizes that they are different than companies with 50 employees.
- Target small businesses in a strategic sector or region and encourage them to join B4B, using outreach efforts identified in the 3 year B4B marketing strategy.